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Official Records

Seventy-first session

5th plenary meeting
Monday, 19 September 2016, 12.30 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the Co-Chair, Ms. Young (Belize), Acting Co-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 2.10 p.m.

High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants

Agenda items 13 and 117 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The Acting Co-Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

Mr. Makei (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In today's globalized world, human mobility has become an increasingly topical issue. The current situation concerning migrants and refugees throughout the world remains complex and is still characterized by a lack of predictability and controls. lies. There is a crisis of understanding of cause-and-effect relations in emergency humanitarian situations accompanied by mass movements of people. Most refugees today are the indirect result of protracted armed conflicts in different regions and countries. That is the result of direct interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, in contravention of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is in that context and in the context of today's meeting that this is an excellent opportunity to emphasize the inalienable nature of the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter. We call for everyone to respect them.

The modern system that is designed to legally regulate the hosting of migrants and refugees is currently being put to a serious test. In some destination countries, pledges made in the past at the international level in terms of safeguarding the rights of migrants and refugees, and human rights in general, have not been met in many cases. We need to respond to the social tensions and hostility towards refugees and migrants. We believe that in order to prevent these situations, refugees and migrants must have access in host countries to sufficient means to protect their rights. Specific attention to migrants and refugees must be focused on the most vulnerable segments, including the disabled, the elderly and women and children, especially unaccompanied minors.

There can be no doubt that uncontrolled mass flows of people generate fertile ground for organized crime. That leads to human trafficking, destabilizes societies and leads to more hostile attitudes towards migrants and refugees. In such conditions, host countries need to maintain a balance so that their laws can, on the one hand, provide for the seamless integration of migrants and refugees into their societies and, on the other hand, not run counter to the national interests and take into account opportunities and peculiar aspects and opportunities in specific regions and countries.

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At the same time, we must fully understand that smooth integration means that we not only need to provide for the rights of migrants and refugees, but that there are obligations to respect national law. Until recently, migrants and refugees have often been seen as a sort of burden. However, we are happy to note that awareness has been changing and that the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which world leaders adopted here last year, acknowledges that migrants and refugees can become active participants in sustainable development and contribute to economic growth.

In order to do that, we must create conditions for orderly, safe, legal, and responsible migration. International support in that regard is very important, but financial assistance to host countries to develop necessary mechanisms to take in refugees and migrants is not always sufficient. Quite often, host countries must deal with these issues on their own. Therefore, humanitarian assistance must be closely linked to issues related to financing for development.

Actively advocated by many countries today, the principle of shared responsibility must first of all place responsibility on those who fanned the flames of conflict on the territories of sovereign countries, which have forced people to leave their homes en masse. In order to streamline and strengthen mechanisms for managing migration flows, we need coordinated action on the part of all involved. That is why, in ensuring favourable migration conditions throughout the world, we believe in the important role of partnerships among all parties involved, including first and foremost countries themselves, civil society, international organizations and the private sector. Such partnerships must be based on mutual trust, understanding and assistance.

Finally, we would like to welcome the International Organization for Migration as a new member of the United Nations family. We are convinced that the potential and vast expertise of that respect organization will help us further to effectively achieve our goals in the area of migration policy.

The Acting Co-Chair: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Seychelles.

Ms. Potter (Seychelles): We are here today to decide whether we can act as if it is business as usual that millions of people displaced and racing to save their lives and families is a phenomenon that we are bound to accept in a world torn apart by war and hate and battered by climate change; whether we can allow a few countries to bear the burden of this enormous global crisis — countries that, I must say, have been incredibly generous in this time of crisis; and whether we can just put a band-aid on this situation and hope, against all odds, that things will go back to normal. We have to find a just and lasting solution to the problem of mass irregular movements of people.

Only a rights-based approach can guarantee that. Migrants as well as the populations of both transit and destination countries are human beings, and hence rights-holders. The international community, States and Governments, along with civil society organizations and groups, whether in countries of origin, transit or destination, are duty-beareres with respect to those rights-holders, and they should endeavour to deliver on their rights. Respect for the rights of migrants is the only way to protect them from human traffickers, smugglers of migrants and violent extremists, who take advantage of their movement to rip them off or commit acts of terror in countries of transit or destination. Such respect for human rights should also extend to the population of transit and destination countries by ensuring that migration inflows take place within the carrying capacity of local communities, so that migrants may feel welcome and their integration facilitated.

Respect for the human rights of migrants and local populations in countries of transit and destination is possible only within the context of regular, controlled flows of migrants. Large, irregular flows disrupt that process. Therefore, urgent actions are needed to prevent regular, managable flows of migrants from turning into irregular, mass movements. That is possible only if the international community tackles the causes that unleash large, irregular displacements of migrants: armed conflicts, natural disasters and the absence of inclusive governance. Armed conflicts always lead to the migration of civilians fleeing combat zones. But such movement tends to become massive in situations where there is no respect for international humanitarian law. Strict adherence to international humanitarian law will contribute to a solution to the current migration crisis. Good governance, democracy and inclusive development models will go a long way towards reducing the risk of the outbreak of conflicts.

Against the backdrop of despair on the ground we are witnessing today, let us look towards the bird of hope facing us. Like the country in which we meet today, Seychelles too is a melting pot of cultures, colours

and races. It is a land born of migrants, nurtured over centuries through the arrival of people from all ends of the world, aiding the growth of our vibrant economy. We are undoubtedly strengthened by our diversity, and it is an experience we share with pride.

Let us make decisions today that reflect our global society's potential for compas ion and collaboration, and show that we are capable of so much more than destruction, hate and fear. Let us decide that we can, and must, do more together.

The Acting Co-Chair: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration of Namibia.

Ms. Iivula-Ithana (Namibia): I am privileged and honoured to address the 2016 high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants in this historic city of New York. This meeting is taking place when movements of people have reached an unprecedented level, thereby requiring nations to work together to manage the movement and ensure that the rights of migrants and refugees are observed and respected.

Namibia is hosting refugees that came to our country as a result of conflicts in their countries of origin. The Government provides support and amenities in a dedicated place, making it easy to ensure safety and provide shelter to refugees. The Government also provides free primary and secondary education to refugees and asylum seekers' children, as well as free medical services to all refugees. Currently, Namibia is hosting 3,388 refugees and asylum seekers.

Providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, however, is not a sustainable exercise for Governments, nor does it provide a dignified life for the affected community. The world must look at addressing the root causes of the displacement that is forcing human beings to abandon their livelihoods in the countries of their birth for lives in refugee settlements. Although host countries may, where possible, consider local integration for those who choose it, which provides a degree of a dignified life, not all refugees can be happy with that option.

Last June, Namibia launched its first country migration profile. The profile has provided further clarity that migrants are contributing to economic growth and development in our country by filling positions in various sectors where the internal labour market has critical shortages. That has presented us an opportunity to tap into migrants in those sectors while directing the training of locals in areas identified to reduce the deficit in the labour market. Deliberate policies are now being crafted to respond to the need and provide a policy framework in managing the process.

While migration has a positive impact on development, Governments must ensure that people are not migrating out of desperation but as a choice. Equally, we need to encourage our people to use legal channels of migration. The sending, transit and receiving States need to work together on that matter to reduce the vulnerabilities created when illegal migration channels are used.

Continued political unrest worldwide remains the driver of millions of people from their places of habitatation to the unknown world across international boundaries. At the same time, resources to provide support to refugees are diminishing. The international community needs to work towards eliminating all man-made causes of migration so as to reduce human suffering and improve human lives. Those causes are well known and well documented — such as human rights violations and abuse, armed conflict, persecution, terrorism, poverty and food insecurity. Environmentally, some countries are adversely affected by climate change and natural disasters.

Nations need to work together to improve conditions so as to make migration a choice rather than the only alternative. On the other hand, receiving and sending countries need to work together to ensure respect for the human rights of those who choose to migrate and those forced to leave their places of residence due to unfortunate conflicts or natural disasters. Namibia, although also affected by the effects ofclimate change, is ready to play its part in this endeavour.

The Acting Co-Chair: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Firuden Nabiyev, Chief of State of the Migration Service of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Nabiyev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): The expansion of the geographic area of conflicts and crises across the world over recent years has resulted in an increse in the number of persons who have lost their lives or been forced to flee. More than 60 million people have been forcibly displaced as a result of conflicts and violations. The international community must first and foremose prevent armed conflict and step up efforts to

resolve existing conflicts in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, first and foremost the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

With regard to addressing issues relating to refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs), it is very important to cooperate with organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the relevant United Nations mechanisms.

We believe that, in today's difficult situation, the needs of IDPs — the number of which now stands at a record 41 million — should not go unaddressed. They require a holistic approach from the international community. This difficult situation requires serious consideration by way of drafting a universally binding document based on the guiding principles on internal displacement. In that context, Azerbaijan welcomes the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons. That document is considered to be the first binding one on forced displacement. At the same time, we hope that the ambitious goals set out in the Secretary-General's agenda for humankind to reduce forced displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030 will be fully achieved.

We believe that IDP issues are sensitive and important. That is understandable. Our country has faced large-scale intenal displacement issues due to the occupation of our territories by Armenia. Azerbaijan, with a total population of 9.7 million, is among the countries with the greatest burden of displaced persons per capita. It has been more than 25 years that Armenia has been grossly violating norms and principles of international law. It is continuing its efforts to shore up the current status quo and hinder the return of thousands of Azerbaijani IDPs to their homeland. Furthermore, it should be noted with regret that Armenia is taking advantage of the current refugee and migrant crisis to settle Armenians from Syria in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. That is an outright violation of international humanitarian law, first and foremost the Fourth Geneval Convention of 1949.

Azerbaijan has undertaken to resolve all the problems of IDPs forced from their homeland. That includes measures to provide employment, education, accomodation and medical needs. The Government is addressing all those issues on an ongoing basis. In the recent period, 100 model settlements have been built to accommodate thousands of refugee and IDP families. Over the past 20 years, approximately $6 billion has been spent to adress IDP social issues in Azerbaijan. The efforts of our Government on IDP issues have been highly appreciated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and others.

We believe that today's New York Political Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) reflects the notion that we should consider strategies to protect IDPs, including to prevent situations that give rise to IDPs and reduce their number. By doing so, we give a global push for the efforts to prepare an effective protection network for this vulnerable group of people. We stand ready to continue to make our contribution to that process.

The Acting Co-Chair: We have no other speakers in the Hall at this time. I shall suspend the meeting until the matter can be straightened out.

The meeting was suspended at 2.50 p.m. and resumed at 3.05 p.m.

Co-Chair Lykketoft took the Chair.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rabbani (Afghanistan): At the outset, I wish to convey our gratitude to His Excellelncy Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for convening today's high-level meeting on addressing the large movement of refugees and migrants. We have gathered here today against the backdrop of an unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees across the world. The time has come, therefore, to put into motion a concerted international response to address this growing phenomenon holistically and in all its aspects.

Based on our own experience, Afghanistan is well aware of the complex challenge associated with the issue of global refugees. The legacy of more than two decades of armed conflict and violence brought about a situation whereby millions of Afghan women and children were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge abroad. More than 95 per cent of our refugees live in the neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan, and we are grateful for their generosity in hosting our people.

Since beginning a new chapter in Afghanistan in 2001, millions of Afghans have returned to their homeland, marking the largest repatriation movement in modern history. For several years now, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations have had the central role in international efforts to support and assist Afghan refugees during some of the most difficult moments of our nation's life. We are grateful for their support and commitment to address the plight of our refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Needless to say, millions of our citizens remain refugees and continue to face difficult social, economic and humanitarian conditions. In that regard, I would like to underscore the importance of ensuring that all refugees, whether Afghan or of any other nationality, are granted respect and equal treatment by host countries, in accordance with international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Since its formation two years ago, the National Unity Government has pursued a national and regional effort together with our relevant international partners for a viable and long-term solution to the plight of Afghan refugees, with special emphasis on voluntary return and sustainable reintegration. To that end, the Quadripartite Commission — made up of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — and the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, adopted in Geneva in 2012, remain the overarching framework within which the National Unity Government is striving to achieve the voluntary, gradual and dignified return of our refugees and their sustainable reintegration

As a matter of equal importance, we are also adamantly focused on addressing the problems faced by our internally displaced persons, who over the past two years have increased in number mainly as a result of insecurity in some parts of the country caused by violence and terrorism committed by the Taliban and affiliated groups. I would like to reiterate our appeal to the international community to play a long-term supporting role to effectively address the plight of our refugees and IDPs.

We in the National Unity Government are cognizant that Afghanistan's social and economic development provides the ultimate guarantee for resolving the challenges facing refugees and IDPs in a holistic manner. We are working to improve conditions for our people in towns, villages and districts across Afghanistan. To that end, we look forward to the upcoming Brussels Conference on Afghanistan to be held in two weeks' time, where we hope the international community will make new pledges of assistance to help us implement our National Peace and Development Framework, which aims at enabling us to achieve self-reliance during the transformation decade.

We are pleased that today's high-level meeting places due focus and attention on addressing the root causes of migration at the global level. In most cases, those who resettle do so not as a matter of choice but of circumstances. Poverty, conflict and a lack of economic opportunities are some of the main factors leading to resettlement. In that regard, the central role of the United Nations will remain of strategic importance in providing support across a wide spectrum, including development assistance, conflict prevention, systems development, peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), last September here in New York was a milestone charting a new development framework over the 15 years. The implementation of the SDGs will go a long way in helping to ensure peace, security and a stable economic environment in countries of origin by offering an incentive to people and families to avoid resettlement.

In that context, Afghanistan expresses its concern about the continuing trend whereby migrants and refugees are subject to acts of xenophobia, discrimination and other stereotypes based on religious and cultural differences in some parts of the world. A renewed effort is needed to push back against that dangerous narrative, which constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law, including human rights law. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to launch a global campaign to counter various forms of discrimination against migrants and refugees. We must perceive diversity as a source of strength and optimism, rather than seeing it from a negative perspective. After all, humankind is one, irrespective of our cultural, religious and geographical differences. We all aspire towards the same goals: the chance to live in peace, to prosper and, above all, to ensure a better and brighter life for our children and future generations.

Today's summit is a fitting opportunity for all of us to reaffirm our shared commitment to protect and promote the rights of all refugees and migrants, and to

do so in adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Afghanistan welcomes the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and its two annexes, entilted "Comprehensive refugee response framework" and "Towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration".

Before concluding, I would like to convey our gratitude to the co-facilitators for for so ably leading the intergovernmental negotiations on our conference declaration.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Susana Malcorra, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.

Ms. Malcorra (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are gathered here to find concrete responses in the face of what has become the greatest migration crisis in recent history. Migration movements are not a new phenomenon. A year ago, in the Sustainable Development Goals, we took note of its importance to developing economies. However, the images we have seen recently cause pain and concern for all of us. Day after day, we receive news of thousands of people suffering and dying in an attempt to save themselves from violence, persecution and poverty. Against that backdrop, we cannot, and must not, remain indifferent. It is time to act.

In my counry of Argentina, immigration has been from the very beginning one of the main drivers of our economy. Immigration has had a decisive impact on our social, political and cultural order. For Argentina, immigration is part of our social DNA. It is difficult to find someone of my generation who does not have a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent who cam from abroad to immigrate to our country. Many of them left to flee war and hunger — that is, they were refugees. We live together peacebly — Christians, Jews and Muslims. We are an open society enriched by its diversity.

Argentina is home to the largest number of immigrants in our region. Thousands of people from Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile and Peru have seamlessly integrated themselves into our country in recent years. It is a matter of pride to know that, in a world with an abundance of trends towards fragmentation and conflict, my country is an example of tolerance, coexistence and, above all, solidarity. As the Sescretary-General rightly points out, the global migrant and refugee crisis is one of solidarity, not of numbers.

Let us recall the spirit of solidarity that once brought our countries together. Today we have an opportunity to be part of a joint solution to this problem. Argentina has a major commitment on humanitarian matters. More than 20 years ago, our While Helmets were recognized by the General Assembly for their valuable contributions. This issue is no exception. Last May, our White Helmets travelled to Lebanon to offer their assistance at a refugee camp for Syrians. Moreover, Argentina operates a humanitarian visa programme that facilitates the entry of persons affected by the Syrian conflict. We guarantee them residency permits and the same civil rights all Argentines have, so that they can have access to jobs and education for their children.

That is a task that has to be a team effort. It is with the help of all sector of society that we will be able to achieve genuinely inclusive and multifaceted development. We in Argentina count on the important support of the Lebanese and Syrian community, civil society organizations and religious institutions, all of which are assisting us in this process.

People do not become refugees by choice. They flee because their lives are in danger. They flee even knowing that they are at risk in doing so. Major changes happen step by step. That is why the United Nations gives us a horizon towards which to move forward, and why Argentina is determined to move towards it with determination. Members can count on our support today and always.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdusalam Hadliyeh Omer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia.

Mr. Omer (Somalia): It is a privilege and an honour to be here at this crucial high-level meeting.

Addressing the root causes of large movements of refugees is an absolute prioriy for us all, given the global situation. At the outset, let me pay tribute to the Government and the people of Kenya for hosting Somali refugees for nearly three decades at the Dadaab refugee camp. I had an opportunity to visit the camp earlier this year, along with His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia. I have never been so humbled or as determined to ensure that the root causes of large movements of refugees is addressed, both at home and abroad.

All of us should ask ourselves what makes a human being risk it all and leave the land they love. Essentially, that is what they do when they become refugees. Refugees leave behind not just their homes, property and families, but also their inner happiness, their dignity and the confidence of belonging. Most people will never understand what it means to be a refugee or what it feels like. I think it is important that we get to know refugees and listen to their stories to understand them better and appreciate their journey. In that way, we can create the most effective policies locally, nationlaly and internationally to assist.

Somalia has suffered nearly three decades of civil war, compounded by drought and famine, resulting in a huge displacement of populations inside and outside. Because of its stabilization efforts and good governance, the country has recently attracted many of its people to return home. Even migrants from the Yemen crisis have come to be in a safe place. In its recovery period — engendered by its own efforts internally by institutions, State-building and significant assistance from the international community — the return of the Somali diaspora has become a possibility.

Somalia is one of the biggest contributors to migration and refugee flows. Over 1 million live outside Somalia, while another 1 million live as internally displaced people. For that reason, Somalia agreed with its partner Kenya and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to find a durable solution for displaced people, in keeping with a tripartite agreement. That means that the process should safeguard the safety and dignity of returnees and take place in a humane manner. The Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia has decided to prepare a reintegration plan to cover the needs of 170,000 returnees in a phased manner and to seek funds for implementation in phases.

Finally, the Somali Government requests the international community to continue and increase its funding so that the Somali displaced population and other populations around the world find a durable solution to their problems, which will enhance peace and stability for Somalia.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John F. Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Mr. Kerry (United States of America): I want to applaud the United Nations for convening this very timely meeting on the large-scale movement of refugees and migrants. Obviously, we all come here convinced that there should be no question that we all need to do more in order to help people who are fleeing persecution and violence. The leaders' summit on refugees, to be hosted tomorrow by the Secretary-General, President Obama and the six partner Governments, is designed to complement and to reinforce the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), which we adopted today, and to mobilize Governments everywhere to increase their efforts to cope with what has become a global humanitarian crisis, which in some places is a catastrophe.

Make no mistake: additional efforts are urgently needed. As we meet, an estimated 65 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes, including more than 21 million people who have fled across international borders. It is in the world's singular interests, best interests, and it is right, to ensure that people who desperately need a new home, whether in or beyond the boundaries of their own country, can actually find a place to live in safety, with food, medicine, school and the time to plan for what comes next.

The task of providing such a refuge falls most heavily on those States that are directly embroiled in strife, on their neighbours and on the nations along nearby exit corridors. But the responsibility to assist is shared by all. We therefore have to do our part to try to end wars, to oppose violent extremism, to respect human rights and to support policies that humanely and effectively manage the flow of people who are on the move.

The key elements of those policies are well understood. Working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), we have created norms that honour the rights of refugees. We have established rules for political asylum, voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration. We have reaffirmed the principle that impartial aid workers ought to be granted unfettered access to deliver emergency assistance to civilians who are trapped in areas of conflict. We may even, this afternoon, have heard about an incident in Syria that flies directly contrary to that right.

To improve our capabilities, the United States applauds the decision this year to make the International Organization for Migration — ably led by Bill

Swing — a part of the United Nations system. That step avoids the potential for duplication of effort and helps to concentrate funds where they will do the most good. We also call for the establishment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for internally displaced persons, recognizing that the vast majority of people who are driven from their homes are within their own countries. The plight of the internally displaced is not identical to that of international refugees, and it therefore requires special attention.

The world knows what it must do to respond effectively to the massive challenge that we face. But we have to apply the knowledge systematically and we need the resources to be able to do so before it is too late. As President Obama will make clear at the leaders' summit tomorrow, the gap between the funds that we have and the funds that we need remains enormous.

Today, the United States remains the world's largest donor of humanitarian assistance and refugee relief, and we are proud of that. But we would be even more satisfied if the need were ended. My country has now resettled more refugees through UNHCR's resettlement programme than all other nations combined. But we are far from satisfied about that too. On the contrary, we are determined to work with Members to create more opportunities for refugees, to provide more fully for the special needs of women, children and people in danger of persecution and to furnish additional help to countries that are on the front lines of humanitarian crises. To those ends, and more, we ask Members' support and we pledge our own continued best efforts.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Albert Koenders, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Koenders (Netherlands): Over 65 million people today are either refugees or internally displaced — almost four times the population of my country. Although migration is natural, forced displacement certainly is not. It comes with deep human suffering, caused by the failure of nations to protect their citizens. Every single person in this room has a responsibility to eradicate the reasons to flee. Our responsibility is major, our responsibility is shared and our responsibility is immediate.

Our responsibility is major because too many people are forced to leave everything behind in exchange for an uncertain future. Too many people are still being exploited. Too many people are still risking their lives.

The Netherlands wishes to underline four priorities to address the crisis. First of all, root causes of forced displacement must be addressed, with conflict at the top. Secondly, vulnerable groups such as women and children deserve special attention and protection. Thirdly, migration should be made as regulated as possible. Fourthly, an effective global response requires effective action by the United Nations and each of its Members. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) recognizes these priorities. The Netherlands is therefore happy to support it.

Our responsibility is also shared because the international community must offer security and protection to people in need. Let us be frank about it — we have not done so. Causes and solutions involve the full participation of all United Nations Member States, without exception. The Netherlands welcomes the recognition of that shared responsibility in today's Declaration. It provides a good basis for collective action. To be clear, each State is responsible for the well-being and safety of its citizens. That responsibility cannot be dodged; it cannot be outsourced to the international community. Likewise, countries that welcome refugees, such as the Netherlands, are responsible for their successful integration in society. Shared responsibility means that all countries do their part to bring down forced displacement and to manage its humanitarian consequences when it does occur. They must offer or support legal ways for resettlement and other forms of admission, and provide protection for the most vulnerable.

The Netherlands is shouldering its responsibility, in close cooperation with the European Union. We are working on broad partnerships on migration with countries of origin and transit, countries in Africa and countries neighbouring Syria. These are partnerships that recognize all interests, and we have to recognize all interests. They are based on an equal footing — otherwise they would not work. On behalf of the European Union's High Representative, earlier this year I discussed the outlines of a migration partnership with my colleagues in Mali, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The agreements that we reached are proof of something that, in my view, is possible — a new partnership on migration. It is a proof of concept for the equal footing embodied in the Valletta approach.

Together, we are improving border control, we are acting against ruthless migrant smugglers who put vulnerable lives at risk and we are improving regulated

migration. Most importantly, together, we are giving people better prospects for a dignified life in their own country or region, as close as possible to their homes. To name just one example, the Netherlands is funding scholarships for 3,500 young Syrian refugees in their host countries in the region. Being able to study gives these refugees a chance for a better future in the societies that host them and, hopefully, in Syria.

Our responsibility is major and it is shared, but it is also immediate. The Netherlands will not wait until both global compacts are agreed on in 2018 because our responsibility will not wait. Suffering will not wait. Today's Declaration confirms and supports the efforts that we are already making, and it encourages all of us to step up those efforts. We must reverse the trends of ever-increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people. That is why I want to set a challenge for all of us today. We should do everything possible to cut that number of 65 million down by more than two thirds, to less than 20 million by 2030. I ask everyone gathered here to join me in this ambition. It is difficult for all of us — it is not easy — but I ask everyone to help achieve it.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia): At the outset, I would like to thank the Presidents of the General Assembly at its seventieth and seventy-first sessions for co-hosting this very important meeting.

We are in the midst of a very serious refugee and migrant crisis, the largest such crisis since the end of Second World War — one that is not subsiding but is, on the contrary, intensifying in terms of scope and magnitude. Nine months after the decision was reached to convene this meeting, the situation has become even worse and more complex, with no comprehensive solution in sight. Despite serious efforts to address these and other growing challenges, the international community has failed, so far, to adopt an adequate approach to resolve the problem. It is clear that we need to find a solution for the main root causes of the crisis and to put an end to the wars and conflicts that have produced the largest number of refugees.

My country is located along one of the major routes for the movement of refugees, the Western Balkans route. Over the past year and a half, more than 700,000 refugees and migrants have transited through Serbia. We have demonstrated our solidarity and humanity, for which Serbia has frequently received praise not only from migrants themselves, but also from United Nations agencies and the international community. We have organized reception centres, accommodation and transport. We have provided food, clothing, health care and special care for women, girls and children, as well as for the sick and elderly.

Our empathy for refugees and migrants and our essential understanding of their suffering and predicament arise from the fact that we have faced the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) for over two decades. Even today, our country is home to a total of 250,000 refugees and IDPs living in protracted displacement, the largest number in Europe. We have been making tremendous efforts to find durable, just solutions for refugees from the region and for IDPs in our territory who are living in protracted displacement. The reduction in the number of refugees in the territory of the former Yugoslavia was largely the result of their integration in the Republic of Serbia, which involved over 300,000 people. In that way, Serbia bore the largest burden of a durable solution for the refugee problem. Regrettably, out of 200,000 IDPs, only 4,000 — or 1.9 per cent of the people expelled 17 years ago from our province of Kosovo and Metohija — have returned to their homes.

The migrants coming to Serbia arrive from European Union (EU) countries and strive to reach northern EU members. When northern sections of the route are closed, there is a risk of Serbia becoming a bottleneck for several thousand migrants stranded in Serbia, which is already the case. Currently, there are more than 7,000 migrants and asylum-seekers in Serbia. In coordination with the neighbours along the Western Balkans route, we have undertaken measures to prevent irregular migration and to suppress the activities of criminal smuggling groups.

While the influx of refugees and migrants has somewhat decreased since March of this year, the Western Balkans route is far from closed, owing to the active involvement of criminal groups. We do not want to erect walls and we are ready to show solidarity and bear our share of the burden of the crisis. However, as a country that has been dealing with a problem of protracted displacement for more than 20 years, we do not have the capacity to be a long-term mass shelter for migrants. We therefore urge that we work to find a comprehensive European and global solution and a way

to share the burden equitably. The Republic of Serbia made a pledge at the London conference on Syria in February and has donated €500,000 to UNICEF for the education of children in Syria.

Today's adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) has put in place a political framework for addressing issues related to refugees and migrants. What we need now is to ensure that our jointly mobilized political will is translated into action. Serbia is ready to work with all Member States to implement the goals set out in the Declaration.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: Since no one is ready to speak, I shall suspend the meeting yet again.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia.

President Lungu: At the outset, let me join others who have spoken before me to express gratitude to the Secretary-General for organizing this high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. I am hopeful that this summit, the first of its kind, will indeed provide a unique opportunity for the global community to identify conditions that have exacerbated large movements of refugees and migrants in order to strengthen our collective response to these movements.

My Government considers the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit of May 2016 as critical to the ongoing efforts to improve humanitarian assistance, particularly the political commitments to end displacement, as well as to the need for humanitarian and development actors to work together and find ways of financing humanitarian and development activities. It is important for us to build on the key commitments of the Summit in order to address the gaps in humanitarian assistance for people in vulnerable situations.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the high-level meeting (resolution 71/1), which, inter alia, emphasizes the need to provide host countries with support in key life-saving sectors, such as water and sanitation, nutrition, health care and shelter, including support to community-based development programmes. My Administration further aligns itself with the commitments outlined in the document with the conviction that these undertakings will go a long way in alleviating the suffering of the increasing numbers of people who are in most cases forced to leave their homes in search of safety due to conflict, war and climate change among other causes.

Zambia has been a long-standing home to refugees from neighbouring countries in the region, as well as from the Horn of Africa. Two years after gaining independence in 1966, the first refugee settlement was established in the western part of the country, followed by another in North-Western Province in 1971. At the peak of conflicts in southern Africa, Zambia hosted more than 300,000 refugees in six refugee settlements, four of which have since been closed. Between 2008 and 2015, more than 210,000 Angolan refugees were assisted in returning to their country. Today, about 23,000 former Angolan refugees have been fully integrated in the Zambian system, in addition to about 6,000 former Rwandan refugees.

Towards the end of 2011, my Government pledged to locally integrate 10,000 former Angolan refugees following the cessation of their refugee status. This durable solution was extended to 4,000 former Rwandan refugees who lost their status after the invoking of the cessation clause in 2013. I wish to report that we have made important strides in the integration of former Angolan refugees, with about 8,000 having been processed for the issuance of residence permits, which will accord the affected refugees the freedoms and rights closer to those enjoyed by Zambians.

My Government has also provided land for the resettlement of the former refugees for farming and other income-generating activities. Close to 2,000 plots of land, worth over $3 million, have been demarcated in resettlement schemes for allocation to former refugees and Zambians on a one-to-one basis. This is one way that, as a country, we believe we can ensure that former refugees and host communities live in harmony. We may extend the local integration programme to refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have lived in the country for more than 10 years in the same spirit.

Zambia has continued to welcome newly arrived refugees from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Somalia who reside both in the camps and urban areas. Out of the total population of 52,419 refugees and former refugees currently in the country, 20,406 reside outside the settlements. This is despite Zambia's having made a reservation to Article

26 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees on freedom of movement. Further, we intend to relax the encampment policy by easing the processes for acquiring urban residency and authority to leave the camps while ensuring the maintenance of security for our people.

I wish to reaffirm my Government's commitment to maintaining an open-door policy for refugees with regard to access to employment and education. We will double our efforts to provide education to refugee children in the settlements in the knowledge that an educated refugee has better prospects than one who is not educated, whether or not they choose to return their country of origin.

To promote self-reliance, my Government has put in place measures for refugees to access work and engage in businesses of their choice. In collaboration with our partners, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we have commissioned a study into the refugee economy, which will assist us in shaping policies on access to work and entrepreneurship. We are confident that these efforts will allow us to transform the widely held perception of a refugee as a burden to a realization that a refugee or migrant is an asset to a country in which they choose to live.

My delegation fully supports the proposed global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration and is hopeful that the consultative process leading to the adoption of the compact will be held in an inclusive and transparent manner. In the same vein, I wish to stress the need for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to play a critical role in this process. Furthermore, Zambia welcomes the agreement between the United Nations and IOM, which is aimed at forging a closer legal and working relationship.

As I conclude, I wish to reaffirm Zambia's commitment to its international obligations arising from the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees as the foundation for the international refugee protection regime, including the core principle of non-refoulement. Under these instruments, Zambia takes seriously its responsibility to offer protection to those who seek asylum and will continue to play its role in assisting people affected by conflict, human rights violations and other threats to their well-being.

Co-Chair Lykketoft: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.

Mr. Nin Novoa (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): In our understanding of the migration phenomenon, we must understand in particular the causes or driving forces of migration and the displacement of populations, such as economic inequalities, poverty, environmental disasters, wars and conflicts and the specific characteristics of migrations associated with these causes.

Uruguay is aware of the alarming global migration and refugee crisis that has displaced over 65 million people worldwide and has resulted in over 21 million refugees. These are figures unprecedented in all of human history, and all States must act and respond accordingly. Today's meeting is an excellent opportunity to meet existing legal obligations and best practices, and to commit ourselves to the principle of shared responsibility while maintaining our vision of international solidarity and human dignity.

International migration is a key component in our country's history. It has had a significant demographic, social, cultural and economic impact. Over many decades Uruguay has hosted many people from diverse origins in search of broader horizons, and in many cases fleeing persecution, war, poverty or lack of opportunities. Starting in 2009, there was a change in migration trends marked by an increase in immigrants originating primarily in countries from the surrounding region. Uruguay became an attractive country for many people who decided to settle there temporarily or permanently, as they sought opportunities to improve their welfare and that of their families.

Uruguay has ratified and signed the most important international agreements, conventions and treaties regarding migration and the protection of human rights, and has development a normative national framework based on the recognition of and strict adherence to the rights of migrants and their family members. That national framework, along with the precepts enshrined in our country's Constitution, lays out the foundations and principles that define our national migration policy.

In the past decade, Uruguay developed a public migration policy, rooted in the protection and promotion of human rights, that has placed the country at the vanguard of the region and the world, as has been recognized in several international forums. The

principles driving our policy are equal treatment and enjoyment of rights between nationals and foreigners, nondiscrimination, sociocultural integration, respect for cultural diversity and identity, gender equality and the full protection of the most vulnerable migrant groups.

Uruguay also fully recognizes the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. At the national level, our country is a party to a series of legal instruments in that arena, notably the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, recognized by the Organization of American States and the United Nations as a model of best practices, as well as the 1994 San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons, which urges Governments to harmonize rules, procedures and requirements as they relate to refugees. Our commitment is evidenced by ongoing national efforts to implement the 2004 Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America and the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, which broadened the definition of the term "refugee", to the benefit of hundreds of people who sought refuge in Uruguay in recent years.

Uruguay wishes to highlight the role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as the main systematic driver of global policies regarding refugees. Nevertheless, more international resources are needed to support the countries that host significant flows of refugees, as well as the countries of origin. In that regard, our country has doubled its voluntary quota for 2015 and 2016. We believe that innovative and sustainable solutions are needed. Successful traditional responses can serve as a foundation, but we must take measures that are truly adapted to the current migration and massive displacement phenomenon.

Policies should be based on a positive outlook of migrants as a basis for our well-being and development, one which values their economic, demographic, social, cultural and political contributions to both their countries of origin and host countries, as they enrich the host country with different perspectives and talents, and should preserve the principle of safeguarding their independence and promoting their self-sufficiency.

In addition, we must avoid restrictive State or refugee institute policies and migration management strategies that could endanger vulnerable migrants or refugees and their families. Any solution must incorporate the principles of equality and non-discrimination regarding those vulnerable groups in order to avoid making them victims twice over. As an case in point, it has been brought to my attention that many of the refugee or migrant women, boys and girls are frequently victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

In that regard, Uruguay's migration policy — a comprehensive strategy, in keeping with Target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — seeks to adjust our mechanisms and instruments with a view to promoting orderly, safe, regular and informed migration and movement in an attempt to strike the appropriate balance between the rights of migrants and the State's security needs.

We also recognize the right to migrate, to return and to voluntarily remain in the country of residence, as well as the positive link between migration and development. These principles should go hand in hand with concrete action that will underscore the contribution of migrants. However, above all, we must ensure that migrants and migration are not criminalized, and that the rights of migrants be recognized and upheld in their countries of origin, transit and destination. We must debunk speeches that use disinformation and spread myths about migrants, as they feed xenophobia, racism and discrimination.

Our commitment towards refugees not only consists in allowing them to enter our country and respecting the principle of non-refoulement, but also involves the State developing a comprehensive plan that will ensure that the basic needs of refugees can be met and that they, in turn, can progress and adapt to their new surroundings. Encouraging refugees' and migrants' participation in the labour market is fundamental, not only to promote their personal development but also to contribute to the country's economic growth.

Uruguay believes we must solve and eradicate the problem of stateless persons, once and for all. We are working to do just that. We need robust national laws based on the relevant international conventions in order to address the vulnerability of those people, which in many cases causes and is a possible consequence of displacement. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for human dignity must be promoted and

protected by States, independently of immigration status.

Mr. Tozaka (Solomon Islands), Acting Co-Chair, took the Chair.

In that connection, as Uruguay has promoted in its foreign policy and international cooperation, intergovernmental coordination is necessary to develop more effective and responsible collective responses, as is setting up comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention, care and protection of migrants, especially vulnerable groups among them, such as victims of human smuggling and trafficking; separated or unaccompanied children, girls and adolescents; victims of gender violence; and asylum-seekers and refugees.

The State of Uruguay shares the concern of the United Nations regarding the need for Member States to work more closely together and in a more coordinated fashion in universal forums such as the General Assembly; and to share responsibilities on a more equitable basis which will certainly help us to find, and come to an agreement on, our responses.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.